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VERTIGO

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SUGGESTED
FOR MATURE
READERS

NEIL GAIMAN
MARC HEMPEL
RICHARD CASE

THE SANDMAN

THE KINDLY ONES

STILL HERE, THEN?

So it would appear, yes.

SO, WHAT'S NEW? ANYTHING MUCH HAPPEN WHILE I WAS GONE?

I have decided to confront the Ladies of the Fury, though it could mean my doom; and I will be leaving shortly so to do; I already have spoken to young Daniel of certain matters...

I am currently contemplating this emerald. And, by the by, the Corinthian has sworn to destroy you for deserting him.

I'M HONESTLY KINDA SORRY I ASKED.

CAN HE *HURT* ME? THE **CORINTHIAN**? CAN ONE DREAM HURT ANOTHER?

COULD HE *KILL* ME?

Kill you? Certainly. Not permanently. But for a while.

IT WASN'T MY FAULT, THOUGH. I DIDN'T ASK TO BE PULLED BACK HERE. WHY DON'T YOU TELL HIM THAT? JUST TELL HIM THAT IT WASN'T MY IDEA.

I can tell him, yes.

PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS.

You have no pennies, Matthew.

I was contemplating this emerald. It was one of the twelve Dreamstones I created, long, long ago.

The greatest of them, the one into which I put most of myself, was the Ruby. There were others-- a Rose-Quartz I gave to poor Alianore, a Fire-Opal, a Black Pearl, a Topaz...

Some of them are scattered. Some have been destroyed.

This was the least of them. It was an Eagle Stone that I created for the great birds. And they used it for a time; and then they returned it to me.

Facets, Matthew.

Each facet catches the light in its own way. It glints and sparkles and flashes uniquely.

It would almost be possible to believe that the facet *was* the jewel; not just a tiny part of it. But, then, as we move the jewel another facet catches the light...

SO? WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

My point? I have no point, Matthew. Save for the jewel, and the facets, and the light. We see an aspect of the whole. But the facet is not the jewel...

AND NOW YOU'RE GOING TO FIGHT THE KINDLY ONES?

In a manner of speaking, Matthew. I will do what I need to do to make them leave the Dreaming, and to cease to trouble its inhabitants.

I DON'T *GET* THIS SHIT. I REALLY *DON'T*. I MEAN, YOU'RE DREAM OF THE ENDLESS. ONE OF THE SEVEN HEAD HONCHOS WHO'VE CONTROLLED THE WHOLE SHOW FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME.

AND YOU'RE *SCARED* OF SOME KIND OF--I DON'T KNOW, THEY AREN'T EVEN GODDESSES--THAT NOBODY EVEN *REMEMBERS* ANYMORE.

I MEAN, WHY DON'T YOU *WAVE* YOUR *HAND* AND MAKE THEM GO =POOF=?

Because there are rules. And because they are part of something far huger and older than simple goddesses and bound and empowered by rules, as I am.

WHATEVER.

AND THE KID?

We have spoken.

HUH? *HE* CAN'T TALK. DON'T GET ME WRONG, HE'S A GOOD KID. I *LIKE* HIM. BUT HE'S NOT EXACTLY A CONVERSATIONALIST YET.

AS I said --we have spoken.

SO WHAT NOW?

Now, I bid farewell to you, and the boy, and the emerald, and the castle. I shall send you away. And I shall go and do what needs to be done with the ladies...

Fare you well, Matthew. I shall not forget you.

Matthew? I sent you away.

NOT IF I DON'T WANT TO GO. IT DIDN'T WORK THE LAST TIME, REMEMBER? SOMETIMES I THINK IT'S ALL I GOT LEFT. NOT GOING.

TELL ME THE TRUTH, BOSS. DO YOU HONESTLY EXPECT TO COME BACK FROM THIS?

No.

Not really.

IF I CAME WITH YOU, WOULD I COME BACK?

I doubt it.

THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.

:TCH:...

:TCH:...

:CAAARRR:...

:TOK-TOK-TOK:.

A penny for your thoughts, Matthew.

WHAT AM I GONNA DO WITH A PENNY?

I WAS THINKING ABOUT DUTY. AND SECOND CHANCES.

WELL? SO WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR? LET'S GO KNOCK 'EM DEAD.

THE KINDLY ONES: 1/2

LUX

WRITTEN BY
NEIL GAIMAN
DRAWN BY
MARC HEMPEL PP. 1-12, 19-24
INKS BY
RICHARD CASE + PENCILS 13-18
LETTERERED BY TODD KLEIN
COLORED BY DANIEL VOZZO
EDITED BY KAREN BERGER
ASSOCIATED BY SHELLY ROEBERG

SANDMAN CHARACTERS CREATED
BY GAIMAN, KIETH & DRINGENBERG

DOWN THE ROAD I GO. I AM FOLLOWING MY FISHIE.
LA LA LAAAA.
BECAUSE MY FISH KNOWS WHERE TO GO.

MY FISH IS THE BORGHAL RANTIPOLE WHO I MADE LOOK LIKE A FISHIE BECAUSE I AM SO CLEVER AND I CAN DO THINGS LIKE THAT IF I WANT...
LA LA LA...

I AM SO CLEVER LA LA LAAAA
IT KNOWNS MANY THINGUMMIES. THE BORGHAL RANTIPOLE THAT IS. AND NOW IT IS INCONSPICUOUS TOO AS WELL.
Yello
LA LA LA. I AM FOLLOWING MY FISH.

EXIT

NGO ARAY.

Hello

HELLO PRETTY LADY. I AM FOLLOWING MY FISH. LOOKING FOR MY DOGGIE. BOTH. AT THE SAME TIME.

IGH ROU GOWNK NGHO ARAY HAI RIRR KHORR ZHE PFOREEZSCH.

WHAT WILL YOU CALL THE POLICE?

GHO ARAY.

HMPH. IF YOU DON'T LET ME IN, I WILL TURN YOU INTO A DEMON HALF-FACE WAITRESS NIGHT-CLUB LADY WITH A CRUSH ON HER BOSS, AND I'LL MAKE IT SO YOU'VE BEEN THAT FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME TO NOW AND YOU'LL NEVER EVER KNOW IF YOU WERE ANYTHING ELSE AND IT WILL ITCH INSIDE YOUR HEAD WORSE THAN LITTLE BUGSES.

EXIT

Hello

MAZIKEEN? LET HER COME THROUGH.

NGO ING ZHENG. HE DEZSHERGZS HEOU.

IF HE DESERVES ME HE MUST HAVE BEEN VERY VERY GOOD INDEED.

I AM FOLLOWING MY FISH.

LOOK, THIS IS THE DREAMING. AND YOU CAN BE ANYWHERE IN THE DREAMING YOU WANT TO BE. RIGHT?

Essentially.

AND THE LADIES ARE EVERYWHERE TOO. ALL THROUGH THE DREAMING. YEAH?

As you say.

SO WHY ARE WE GOING WHEREVER IT IS WE'RE GOING?

RULES, RIGHT?

IT FIGURES.

NOW, VIXEN, IT SAYS HERE THAT YOUR NEW SHOW HAS BEEN PICKETED BY SOME LESBIAN GROUPS? IS THAT *RIGHT?*

OHHH, *MARY,* DON'T GET ME *STARTED*--THE PROBLEM I SEE WITH LESBIANS IS SELF-IMAGE. AT LEAST GAY MEN HAD ROCK HUDSON AND OSCAR WILDE--

--THE BEST *LESBIANS* COULD MUSTER WAS MISS HATHAWAY FROM *THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES.*

TELL ME, VIXEN, DID YOU SET OUT TO BECOME CONTRO-VERSIAL?

CONTROVERSIAL? *MOI?* I *PREFER* TO THINK OF MYSELF AS A BIOLOGICAL WEAPON IN THE WAR BETWEEN THE SEXES.

OR THE FIFTH COLUMN, PERHAPS? *VIXEN,* LADIES N' GENTLEMEN. AND CONGRATU-LATIONS AGAIN ON THE SUCCESS OF THE *CD.*

VIXEN WILL BE APPEARING LIVE AT THE *COMEDY CAVERN* FOR THE NEXT THREE WEEKS IN HER ONE-WOMAN REVUE *'DON'T GET ME STARTED!'*

BELIEVE IT OR *NOT,* A GLENDALE DENTAL HYGIENIST CLAIMS AN *ANGEL* TOLD HER THE DATE OF THE *NEXT* L.A. EARTHQUAKE--AND THAT *THIS* ONE'LL BE THE *BIG* ONE. SHE'LL TELL US *ALL* ABOUT THAT, AFTER THE BREAK. *I'M* MARY GENTIAN, AND *THIS* IS *'MARY IN THE MORNING'*--DON'T GO 'WAY NOW.

THAT WAS *GREAT,* VIXEN. SO, UH, MISS HATHAWAY WAS A *LES*BIAN?

MM-HMM.

IS THAT, LIKE, THE ONE ON THE *TV,* OR THE ONE IN THE *MOVIE?*

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY *SAY,* SUGAR: "IF YOU HAVE TO ASK..."

EXIT

GUEST DRESSING ROOM A

HOW THE *HELL* DID *YOU* GET IN HERE?

HUNDRED-DOLLAR BILLS, HAL. YOU *GIVE* THEM TO PEOPLE, THEY LET YOU WANDER AROUND BACKSTAGE. I TOLD THEM I WAS AN OLD FRIEND AND WANTED TO SURPRISE YOU.

AND, OF COURSE, I *AM* AN OLD FRIEND. AND I *DID* WANT TO SURPRISE YOU.

WELL, SURPRISE, SURPRISE.

SO WHY ARE *YOU* HERE? I THOUGHT AFTER OUR LAST CONVERSATION THAT LITTLE MISS ROSE POLITICALLY CORRECT WALKER FOUND ME JUST *TOO* SOCIALLY *MONSTROUS* TO BE *TOLERATED*.

THAT'S NOT TRUE, HAL. AND YOU KNOW IT. LOOK, I DON'T WANT TO ARGUE. THAT'S NOT WHY I CAME.

UH, ZELDA'S DEAD.

SO: EXEUNT THE SPIDER WOMEN, STAGE *LEFT*. LOOK ON THEIR *WORKS*, YE MIGHTY, AND CLEAN YOURS WITH BLEACH.

YOU *MAY* BE AMUSED TO KNOW THAT, WHILE *THEY* ARE PUSHING UP THE DAISIES, *I*, ACCORDING TO THE LATEST SET OF TESTS, AM STILL GLORIOUSLY--*MAGNIFICENTLY* --*HIV* NEGATIVE.

THAT'S NOT *FUNNY*, HAL.

OH, IT'S FUNNY ENOUGH, COSMICALLY SPEAKING. IF YOU TAKE THE *BROAD VIEW*. BE A GOOD GIRL AND UNZIP ME.

WELL, ZELDA *ISN'T* PUSHING UP THE DAISIES--*YET*. THE FUNERAL'S TOMORROW.

YOU WERE HER ONLY OTHER FRIEND.

I THOUGHT THAT *THIS* MIGHT BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO LET, Y'KNOW, BYGONES BE BYGONES, BETWEEN US, AND WITH WHATEVER HAPPENED BETWEEN YOU AND CHANTAL AND ZELDA.

SHE'S *GOT* NO FAMILY. IF *YOU* DON'T COME, I'M GOING TO BE THE *ONLY* ONE AT THE SERVICE.

SO, WHAT DO YOU SAY?

TWO LETTERS. STARTS WITH AN *N*. RHYMES WITH BLOWJOB, IF YOU LOSE THE JOB AT THE END.

HAL!

SORRY, SWEETHEART. I DON'T *DO* FUNERALS. LIFE IS, AS THEY SAY, TOO SHORT.

AND I CAN'T WEAR *BLACK*. I'M AN *AUTUMN*.

ASSHOLE, HAL. THE WORD YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IS ASSHOLE.

This is the place.

LOOK. BOSS. I'M NOT SURE I'M GOING TO GET ANOTHER CHANCE TO SAY THIS. OR... HELL. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

SO. WHATEVER HAPPENS.

IT WAS GOOD BEING YOUR RAVEN.

REALLY. I MEAN...

IT WAS GOOD BEING YOUR FRIEND.

Friend?

YEAH. FRIEND. SHIT. I DON'T KNOW. WHAT-EVER.

Ladies? I am here. It is time to settle this matter for good.

IT

WELCOME, LADY DELIRIUM. COME IN, COME IN. CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING?

I KNOW YOU.

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE.

AND I KNOW WHO YOU ARE TOO, LADY.

YOU'RE THE DEE EEVEE EE um EYE EL.

NOT ANY MORE. I STOPPED. "QUOTH THE RAVEN..."

WHATEVER.

NOW I'M JUST TAKING THINGS EASY. PLAYING A LITTLE PIANO, AND RUNNING THE BEST DAMNED NIGHTCLUB AND RESTAURANT IN THIS WHOLE CITY OF THE ANGELS.

ANY REQUESTS?

YES.

I WANT MY DOGGIE BACK.

AND I WANT MY BROTHER ALL RIGHT. I DON'T WANT HIM HURT OR ANYTHING.

THAT'S MY REQUEST. PLEASE.

I TOLD HIM, YOU KNOW.

I TOLD HIM YEARS AGO.

IT WAS AT THE END OF MY REIGN. I CLOSED THE FINAL DOOR TO HELL, AND I TOLD HIM...

I TOLD HIM THAT I OWED HIM MUCH FOR HAVING GIVEN ME THE IMPETUS TO GO.

I TOLD HIM THAT THERE WAS **ALWAYS** FREEDOM, EVEN THE ULTIMATE FREEDOM. THE FREEDOM TO LEAVE.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY **ANYWHERE** FOREVER.

I LEAVE PLACES.

I AM SURE YOU DO.

BUT DREAM DOESN'T. I DON'T THINK HE CAN.

YOU KNOW, I SWORE TO DESTROY HIM. YOUR BROTHER.

NO. I MEAN, I DIDN'T KNOW.

WHY?

OH, HE EMBARRASSED ME... HE SAID SOMETHING HE THOUGHT WAS CLEVER... IT'S **NOT** THAT IMPORTANT.

AND NOW... NOW I FEEL ALMOST **SORRY** FOR HIM.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

GO AND FIND YOUR **DOG**, CHILD. GO AND FIND YOUR DOG; IT IS TOO LATE TO HELP YOUR BROTHER.

WHERE ARE THEY?

They will be here soon, Matthew.

Y'KNOW, YOU NEVER ANSWERED MY QUESTION.

Which question would that be?

I WANTED TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR OTHER RAVENS, BEFORE ME, IN THE END.

I remember.

WELL?

What happens at the end? Different things, Matthew. Some ravens have tired of their existences...

...and I sent them, at their request, to my Sister's realm; and what happened after is none of your concern.

One of them I returned to humanity. It was what he thought he wanted. Two of them have stayed in the Dreaming, in other roles.

Lucien is one of those, he was the first Raven of them all.

NO SHIT! BUT HE SAID HE DIDN'T REMEMBER HIS EARLY DAYS...

AND WHAT ABOUT ME?

WE ARE HERE, DREAMLORD.

Faerie

ahem, lady... To conclude my poem, the Envoi.

Princess! The river holds the trout; so does the world take care of me. And if you do not choose to see that what we are, we choose to be, It's hard, but is all one to me.

The rule is cruel, but there's no doubt-- I'll dream tonight of storms at sea... Be sure your sins will find you out.

There. That's my poem done, lady.

Well?

Well? What did you think?

I--I DO NUHNOT **CARE** FOR YOUR POETRY, CLURACAN.

NUHNOR FOR YOUR--⇒*snf!*--MODE OF DELIVERY.

HOW DID YOU KNOW IT WAS **ME?**

THE POETRY S-**SOUND**ED LIKE YOURS. AND YOU'RE VAIN ENOUGH TO WANT TO SEE THE REACTION OF YOUR INTENDED AUDIENCE.

YOU'RE MY **BROTHER**, FOR OUR LADY'S SAKE. IT'S THE KUH**KIND** OF STUPID THING YOU'D **DO**.

NOW, GO AWAY.

YOU'RE **CRYING.**

LORD SHAPER IS IN DIRE NEED. AND HE DOESN'T LOVE ME.

WOULD IT BE BETTER IF HE WAS IN DIRE NEED AND **DID** LOVE YOU?

AND **LOOK** AT ME.

THIS IS WHAT YOU MADE ME.

I **SAVED** YOU FROM **BANISHMENT.** OR **WORSE.** YOU COULD HAVE BEEN SENT AWAY...

YES. ⇒*snnnf.*⇐

THANK YOU FOR THE POEM.

CLURACAN? WILL YOU GIVE ME MY **TRUE** SHAPE BACK, FOR MY **JOURNEY?**

...JOURNEY?

AS YOU **SAID** IN YOUR SILLY POEM. WHAT WE **ARE**, WE **CHOOSE** TO BE.

I CHOOSE TO **LEAVE.**

BROTHER? WILL YOU GIVE ME BACK MY **FACE?**

SO. YOU HAVE COME TO RECKON WITH US...

Yes.

I want you to leave my realm.

I want you to stop harming the entities who live here under my protection.

WE *WILL* DO WHAT WE *SHALL* DO. *EH*, DREAMER?

WE WILL DO WHAT WE *MUST*.

AND WE *CANNOT* LEAVE UNTIL OUR TASK IS DONE.

THIS WOULD BE ONE OF THOSE RULES DEALS AGAIN, WOULDN'T IT?

Hush, Matthew.

And if I fought you? And if I took a stand, here? What then?

THEN NOTHING WOULD CHANGE, DREAM-KING. HOW WILL YOU *FIGHT* US? YOU CANNOT EVEN *TOUCH* US.

TAKE YOUR STAND. WE CARE NOT. WE WILL CONTINUE TO RIP APART YOUR WORLD, *BIT* BY *BIT*, *SHRED* BY *SHRED*.

YOUR SON'S *BLOOD* IS ON YOUR HANDS.

As you say. So... you will not be satisfied with anything less, then?

WHAT DO *YOU* THINK?

LESS THAN *WHAT*? WHAT ARE THEY *ASKING*?

Hush, Matthew, hush. That is none of your concern.

SO YOU'RE DANIEL.

HELLO.

KEEP AWAY FROM HIM.

YOU'RE THE *CORINTHIAN*, AREN'T YOU? THE *NEW* ONE. *HI.*

WHO ARE YOU?

I'M YOUR MASTER'S SISTER.

I *KNOW* YOU. IF YOU TRY TO TOUCH THE CHILD, I WILL TRY TO *STOP* YOU, THOUGH IT MEANS *MY* DEATH ALSO.

I'M NOT HERE FOR *EITHER* OF YOU.

WHERE'S MY BROTHER?

OUR LORD IS WITH THE *LADIES*, MADAM.

THANK YOU, LUCIEN.

UM.

I *LIKED* THE LAST BOOK YOU GAVE ME.

MISS MIRRLEES *HERSELF* WAS MOST FOND OF THE BOOK AS WELL, YOU KNOW: SHE WOULD THINK ON IT FOR *HOURS* BEFORE SHE WENT TO SLEEP AT NIGHT; BUT SHE NEVER *WROTE* MORE OF IT THAN A COUPLE OF PARAGRAPHS.

I *ALSO* HAVE HER SEQUELS TO *A FLY IN AMBER*, SOMEWHERE, A BIT DRY, OF COURSE, NOT FICTION, BUT IF YOU'RE INTERESTED I COULD GO AND--

NOT NOW, LUCIEN.

I'M SORRY. BIT ON EDGE.

WE *ALL* ARE.

WELL, *I* CAN WAIT.

I have no alternative, do I?

NO.

I see.

You are doing something that is extremely inadvisable and will certainly have reper-cussions.

YOU DO NOT SCARE US.

I do not intend to scare you. There are, however, matters of balance to consider.

We make choices.

No one else can live our lives for us. And we must confront and accept the consequences of our actions.

BOSS? WHAT'RE YOU--ARE YOU CRAZY, BOSS?

No, Matthew, but I appreciate your concern.

And I have a task for you.

UH-UH. I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE. I'M STAYING HERE WITH YOU.

This is the last thing I will ask of you, Matthew. Will you deny it to me?

UH. WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Here. Take these back to the castle. Guard them well.

My sister will be there. Ask her to meet me here.

THEY'RE... KIND OF BIG FOR ME TO CARRY.

There!

Take them.

PLEASE.

I'm sorry...?

"TAKE THEM, PLEASE."

I apologize. Will you take them? Please?

OKAY. SURE. NO PROBLEM.

And wait with them.

I DON'T GET TO COME BACK?

I'm afraid not.

I... I'LL SEEYA, THEN. WHEN YOU COME BACK TO THE CASTLE. I'LL WAIT FOR YOU THERE.

Goodbye, Matthew.

sniff

HE SAID YOU'D BE HERE.

HE WANTS YOU TO GO TO HIM.

TO BE CONCLUDED...

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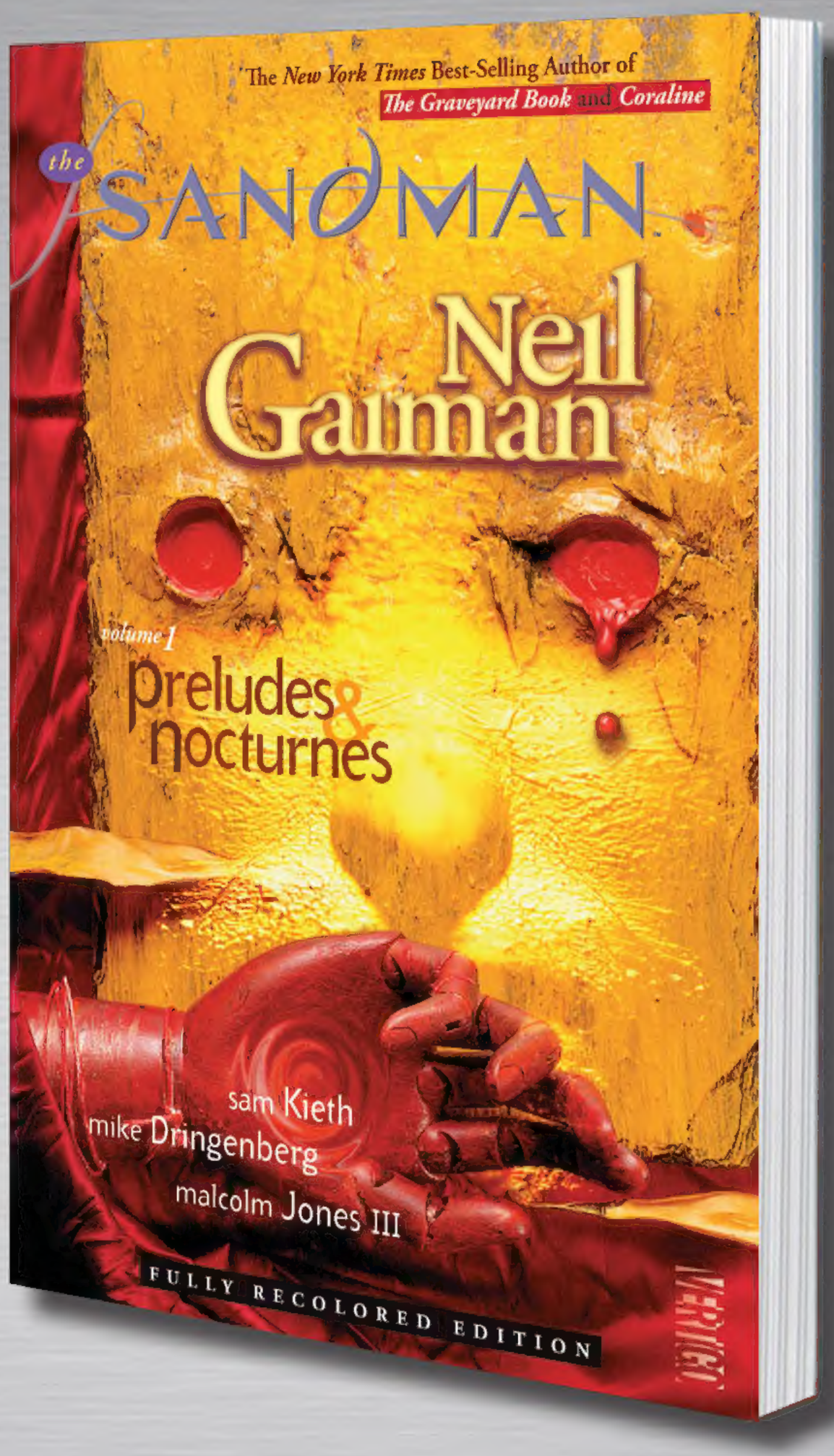

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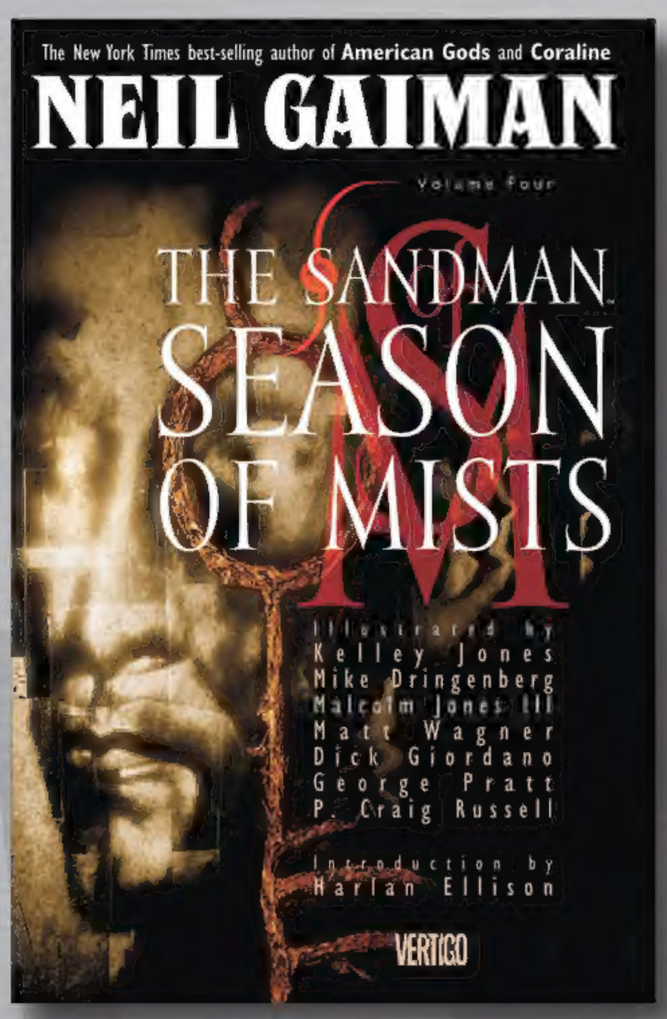

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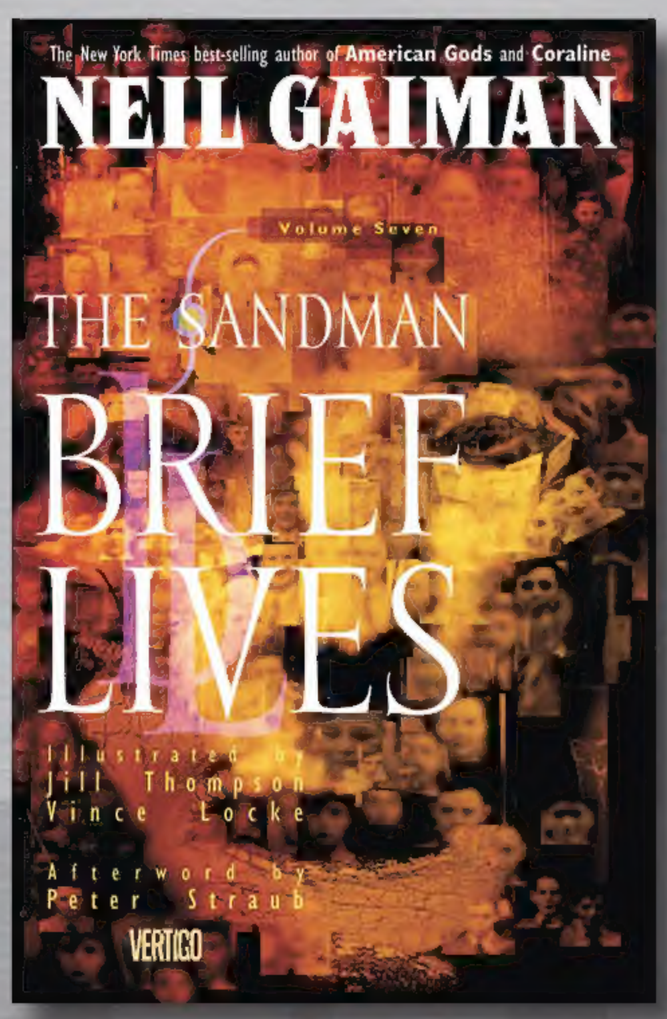

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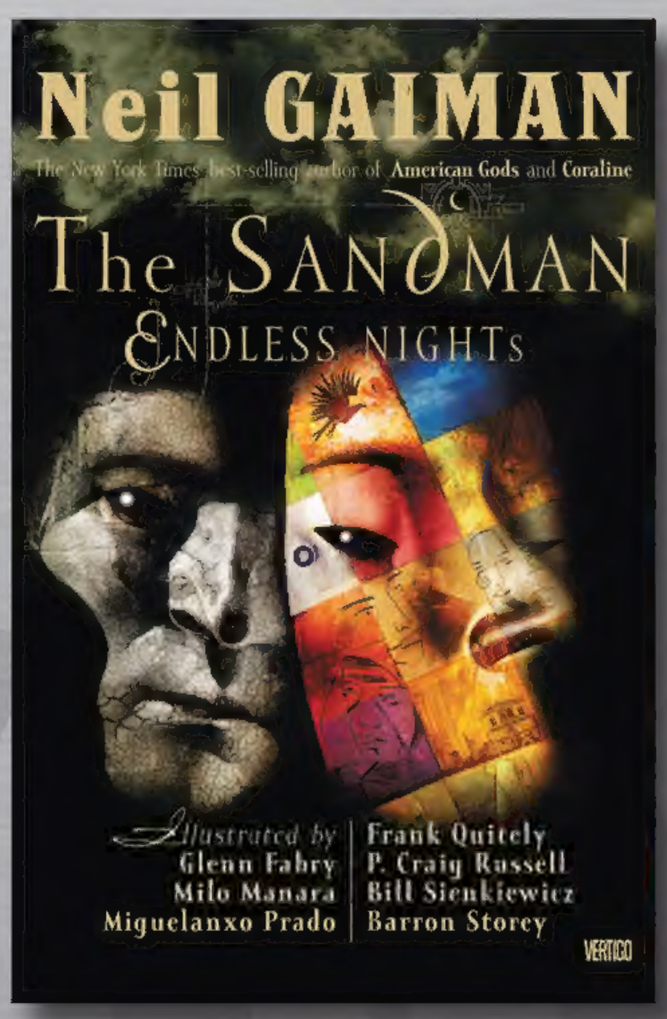

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